

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 1-68 were pending, of which and 57-68 were withdrawn from consideration Amendment, claims 1-30, 33, 44, 54, and 57-68 are canceled, claims 31, 42, 43, and 52 are amended, and new claims 69-70 are presented. No new matter is added.

Claim Rejections: 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 31-58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as reciting subject matter anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,350,260 to Shipp et al.

Applicant has amended claim 31 to require, among other things, that each jaw include a pair of ramps bounding a proximal portion of the clip slot, and that the ramps have outer surfaces that are continuous with outer surfaces of the respective support shelves. Shipp does not disclose this requirement. The Examiner likened Shipp's pivot pins 95 and 97 to the ramps recited in former claim 33. But study of Shipp's Figs. 19 (which label elements 95 and 97) and 21 (which shows but does not label them) reveals that they are not continuous with the outer surfaces of the respective support shelves. At most (and even this is not clear from Shipp's drawings), they may be continuous with the inner engaging side of the jaw. So Shipp does not anticipate the subject matter of claim 31 or any claim dependent thereon. An analogous argument applies to claim 42.

For these reasons, Applicant asks the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

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Respectfully submitted,

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